

CD 2008--18/19



Thursday, January 31, 2008
7:30 pm, Walter Hall

Student Composers Concert

Invocation and Fanfare

Steve Arsenault, Michelle Wylie, trumpets
Marina Krickler, horn
Stuart Bremner, trombone
Ian Feenstra, tuba

Sean King

Elevator Music

Lynn Kuo, violin

Fiona Ryan

Trop

Tim Crouch, flute
Julia Stroud, clarinet
Lance McMillan, bassoon

Elisha Denburg

Four Poems of Emily Dickinson

Allison Arends, soprano
Emma Elkinson, flute
Mohsin Bhujwala, viola
Angela Schwartzkoff, harp
Samuel Lam, conductor

Lee Parkin

INTERMISSION

Calling Loons

- i. Calling Loons
- ii. The Arrival
- iii. Singing With the Loons
- iv. The Loons Take Flight

Avalon Rusk

Lynn Kuo, violin

Rhapsody No. 2

Zhenya Yesmanovich, piano

Constantine Caravassilis

Dance of Dragons

Kevin Lau

Violin 1 - Mark Johnston
Violin 2 - Elizabeth Loewen Andrews
Violin 3 - Maia Broido
Trumpet - Steve Arsenault, Marcel Sekine
Trombone - Annemieke Vanderkraay, Stuart Bremner
Bass Trombone - Nelson Garces
Flute/Piccolo - Sara Moorhouse, Kaili Maimets
Piano - Mark Andrews
Taiko - Lance McMillan, Michelle Colton
Percussion 1 - Greg Samek
Percussion 2 - Tricia Mangat
Conductor - Brian Current

P1/81--8002 (13)

Invocation and Fanfare for Brass Quintet is a piece written in 2007 for the Bloor Street Brass. The Invocation is full of space, and overlapping notes that come from nowhere and disappear into nothing. The horn comes in with a brilliant and touching melody, which returns later. Parts of the Invocation are horn calls and marches and other sounds, the piece is still deciding what it should be, until it gets louder and louder and decides on a Fanfare. The fanfare is loud and fast and uncompromising, in the spirit of many other brass fanfares. It culminates with a repeated triplet ostinato that goes wildly out of control, leading to the big finish.

Sean King is an undergraduate student of composition at the University of Toronto. He is currently studying composition with Alexander Rapoport and has previously studied orchestration with Lorant Oswald. A double bass player and saxophonist by trade, he also has a strong background in jazz and musical theater. His influences range from late Romantic composers to the free jazz of Miles Davis.

Elevator Music is written for solo violin and electronics. The work follows a violinist who travels on an elevator to some unusual floors: fear, confusion, desire, and solitude. At each floor, the elevator door opens to reveal a new soundscape, and the solo violin music is a reaction to or exploration of each of these emotional environments. The musical themes that tie the piece together are derived from the "elevator music" heard while the elevator travels from floor to floor.

Fiona Ryan grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia and developed an interest in music through school music programs and private music lessons. Fiona graduated from Dalhousie University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Music (concentration in clarinet performance), and went on to pursue studies in Composition and Music Theory. In 2004, Fiona graduated from the University of Newcastle (UK) with a Master of Music in Composition, and after a few years as a choir director, returned to University. Fiona is currently studying composition at the University of Toronto, with Christos Hatzis.

Trop (or "trope") is a series of embellishments or ornamentations represented by symbols that is interpolated into the chanting of a liturgical text, especially the Torah and other sacred Jewish scrolls. The unique character and mode of a given set of Trop varies greatly across geographical regions, oral traditions and especially between different texts and religious occasions.

For this piece I have composed my own "set" of Trop, a series of melodic gestures that follow the contour and structure of many of the Trop sets with which I am familiar. Three woodwinds are used with names to represent the three basic hierarchical classes used in the period of the ancient Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Each has a turn to chant their interpretation of the Trop and then lead the trio in a modern interpolation of that chant.

Elisha Denburg is in his first year as a Masters student under the tutelage of Alexander Rapoport.

This project began with the selection of **four poems by Emily Dickinson** and the intention that each poem would have a subject associated with animals. The reason for this was not just personal, but many of Dickinson's most intriguing poems are about animals and nature. The four poems used in this work are: *Bee I'm expecting you!*, *The Robin is the One*, *A Spider sewed at Night*, and *A Dying Tiger moaned for Drink*. Each movement has a unique personality that reflects the mood and characters of the text, and even though at times the music is quite serious, the instrumentation and Dickinson's writing style keep it balanced.

Lee Parkin has been composing, performing, and arranging music since he was very young. He grew up in Barrie, Ontario where he studied piano with Marc Widner and performed in a variety of concerts and musical productions in the area. He went on to complete a Bachelor of Music degree in composition at Montreal's McGill University, studying with Jean Lesage and Ana Sokolovic. Lee is currently pursuing a master's degree at U of T, studying composition with Alexina Louie.

"Calling Loons", written for violin and electronics, imagines a scene on the shore of a quiet and uninhabited lake in remote Northern Ontario. A wind blows gently through the leaves of the trees and a light rain falls on the deep waters of the lake. A violinist stands on the shore and slowly raises her violin and bow. The melody she begins to play is a carefully crafted invitation to any nearby loons to join her in music making. Soon, in a flurry of flapping wings, a family of loons arrives to answer her call.

Born in Ottawa, Avalon Rusk has toured across Canada and the United States as a keyboardist and singer and has performed and composed in a variety of idioms, from contemporary Western art music to jazz/fusion and various types of electronic and popular music.

When writing music, he draws from a rich palette of sounds, combining elements of music from a variety of genres and cultures and weaving them into something entirely new. Of key interest to Avalon is the combination of electronic music and acoustic instruments and the incredible level of versatility and expressive power that it provides.

Avalon began his composition studies with Tony Murgle at Humber College and now studies at the University of Toronto with Alexander Rapoport and Larysa Kuzmenko.

Rhapsody No. 2 "Visitations"

In 2006 I initiated a multi-year project, the Hellenic Keyboard Virtuosi Series, in an attempt to pay homage to my Greek heritage in a highly personalized manner. The initial stage of this ambitious project involves outreaching piano virtuosos of Hellenic descent around the globe, in a series of premieres and repeat performances of my technically demanding piano music. *Visitations* is the second piece of the series, and was commissioned by (and is dedicated to) Greek-born/German-based pianist/composer Demosthenes Stephanidis, who gave the premiere in Yokohama and performed it on a tour of Japan in 2006, which included a recital at the prestigious Bunka-Kailan Hall in Tokyo. Virtually all musical material is derived from a five-note descending motive which transforms itself continuously. The transformations resemble various musical styles, saluting to the great masters who have most influenced and inspired my early work in composition. As a result, several sections of the piece land in different worlds so to speak. Thus, the difficult task while at work was to create parallel musical paths that co-exist convincingly, and converge in an inasmuch organic way possible. The overall architectural idea of the piece was led by such gestalt principles as proximity, symmetry and continuation and crafted with the concept of formal unity in mind.

Constantine Caravassilis (b.1979), a doctoral fellow at the University of Toronto, is a composer of solo, chamber, orchestral, electroacoustic, vocal and operatic works. Hailed as "the most important Hellenic-descent composer of his generation" (Jazz & Tzaz), commanding a "beyond the ordinary sense of musicality", Constantine's music is "constantly charged with emotion and energy in a profoundly individual style" (RCM). He is laureate of the 4th International Composition Competition of Volos city, Greece (three gold medals in the solo, quartet and piano-vocal categories), and won first prize in the Canadian Composers category at the 2006 Syrnix Flute Festival's competition in Winnipeg. His music has been performed in Russia, Cyprus, Germany, France, Denmark, the U.K., Greece, Turkey and Japan, as well as throughout Canada and the United States. He has served as composer-in-residence with Open Strings in Frederiksdaal, Denmark, the Contemporary Opera Lab of the University of Manitoba, and most recently, with the 2007 London Song Festival in Britain, (funded by Arts Council England). Selected compositions and arrangements appear on Marquis and have been recorded by the CBC and broadcast internationally (WGBH Radio in Boston, BBC 3 in Wales, TDK Radio in Tokyo and CNN Turk in Ankara). He frequently collaborates with the Parisian Caravassilis String Quartet and mezzo soprano Ariana Chris.

Although **Dance of Dragons** takes its inspiration from George R.R. Martin's fictional series, "A Song of Ice and Fire," the music is not programmatic in any way. Instead, it is concerned with the channeling of 'primal' sound into a specific temporal form. This form, or 'shape', is modeled after the physical anatomy of a dragon (head, neck, body, tail & wings), although the relationship is of course an abstract one. The dragon thus becomes a mythical symbol unto which the aggressive human ritualism found within the piece is projected.

Kevin Lau's music has been performed by the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra, the University of Calgary Brass Choir, the Canadian Composers' Quartet, the Esprit Orchestra, the Georgian Bay Symphony, the Cecilia String Quartet, and the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, among others. His music has been read and recorded by renowned artists such as Scott St. John and Lara Downes, as well as eminent ensembles such as Eighth Blackbird, the Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal, and the St. Lawrence String Quartet. Kevin has also composed the music to several films, documentaries, and a professional video game based on the movie "300." In 2006 he wrote the score to the theatre musical "Box Office," which was staged seven times at the Tarragon Theatre as part of the 2006 Toronto Fringe Festival. In 2007 Kevin co-founded the Sneak Peek Orchestra, which premiered his Violin Concerto. He is currently pursuing his doctorate degree in music composition at the University of Toronto and is studying with Brian Current, James Rolfe, and Christos Hatzis.